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Executive Summary

Title: The Dragon Enters Africa

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Thesis: China's expanding influence and activity in Sub-Saharan Africa requires the United States to adjust its policies in the region to prevent China from gaining a strategic advantage over the United States and its allies.

Discussion: China's emergence in Sub-Saharan Africa threatens to trump and reverse many of the political and humanitarian gains made by the United States in Sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Cold War era. China's support of autocratic regimes, like Angola and Zimbabwe, to further China's national objectives complicates United States efforts to conduct diplomacy, reduce instability, and promote liberal democracy. The United States cannot reduce its dependence on petroleum from the Middle East without access to supplies from Sub-Saharan Africa. China's growing diplomatic and economic influence in the region threatens United States efforts to diversify its energy supply. Additionally, African states have a quarter of the votes in the United Nations General Assembly. China looks to secure the support and votes of these African states to help influence international politics moving forward.

Conclusion: China's declaration of their Africa Policy in 2006 demonstrated their long term commitment to the region. As the region approaches a crossroads in the direction of its future, the United States must reengage Sub-Saharan Africa beyond combating terrorism in the Sahel and develop a long term strategy involving the use of all instruments of national power.

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Introduction

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States spent the next decade determining how to assert and exploit its position as the world's lone superpower. As the United States tried to establish a "New World Order", it found itself in a new position navigating a geopolitical world void of a peer competitor or true adversary.¹ The spectacular terrorist attacks carried out by Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001 immediately altered the United States international focus with the recognition of a new adversary. The attack on the World Trade Center brought terrorism to the forefront of the national security agenda. Over much of the last decade the United States immersed itself in the "Global War on Terrorism" a struggle to eradicate terrorism from the world. The prosecution of two costly wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the execution of this new agenda continues to this day. As the United States slowly emerges from these conflicts and a worldwide economic recession, it finds itself in a different world with significant shifts in the balance of power. Of these shifts, the emergence of China as an economic giant and potential peer competitor causes the greatest concern.

While the United States spent much of the last decade with its attention on the Middle East in pursuit of terrorism and nation building, China concentrated on Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa in pursuit of natural resources to fuel its economic growth. As a rapidly industrializing nation of over one billion people, China finds itself in tremendous need of energy supplies to sustain its growth. Sub-Saharan Africa, a region rich in natural resources and in dire need of capital investment and infrastructure, serves as a desperate and willing partner for China. China's careful management of relations with African nations dating back to the 1960s makes it a welcome patron in the region. China views Africa as a key component in its efforts to shape

the international environment in the formulation of policies sympathetic to Chinese interests in the United Nations as well as a key source of energy supplies.

Unfortunately, the practices used by the Chinese to attain energy resources and acquire new partners present the United States with new challenges. China's unveiling of its Africa Policy in 2006 lays out a long term strategy for a strategic partnership and economic engagement within the region. China's support of autocratic regimes, in countries like Angola and Zimbabwe, increases the potential for future instability in the region and the success of the state run economy, also known as the China Model, provides autocratic rulers and struggling countries in the region with a compelling economic model to copy. Ultimately, China's expanding influence and activity in Sub-Saharan Africa require the United States to adjust its policies in the region to prevent China from gaining a strategic edge over the United States and its allies.

History of China in Sub-Saharan Africa

In order to understand the Chinese strategy within Sub-Saharan Africa, one must start by examining the history of Sino-African relations over the last fifty years. Many of the recent African inroads made by China resulted from a carefully crafted strategy dating back to the 1950s.

China's establishment of modern relations with Africa started with the 1955 Bandung Conference where 29 developing nations, including China and a few African nations, met to show solidarity by denouncing neocolonialism and pledging to stand up to the western powers.² The Bandung Conference initiated the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement which represented the interests of developing nations.³ Since 1956, when China formally opened diplomatic relations with Egypt, Sino-African relations continued to develop and mature through the

remaining decades of the 20th Century. At the outset, China attempted to build relations with African nations predicated on its five principles of peaceful coexistence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.⁴ The five principles of peaceful coexistence serve as the face of a hidden policy focused on manipulation and the economic exploitation of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Initially, Chinese support for African states hinged on ideological ties in an attempt to spread communism and build support to displace Taiwan as the rightful voice of China in the UN. After the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, China made a concerted effort to build relationships with national independence movements to prevent a takeover of Sub-Saharan Africa by Soviet "revisionism" of communist doctrine or American imperialism.⁵ Despite severe economic issues at home, China provided significant amounts of aid to these countries as they gained their independence. China saw this assistance as vital to sustain these fledgling independent nations. Much of the assistance concentrated on the development of infrastructure as a means of developing symbols of national pride for these newly established countries. One of the more noticeable examples of this was the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia (TAZARA) railway. The Chinese aid and the shared experience of overcoming colonialism garnered China significant support within Africa. This led to the United Nations' recognition of the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government of China and thus the holder of China's permanent membership on the UN Security Council in 1971.⁶ By 1979, China had diplomatic relations with forty-four African nations as they supported independence movements throughout the continent.⁷

In 1979, Sino-African relations began to transition from ideological based support to a new focus on economic prosperity when Deng Xiaoping transformed China's state planned

economy to a market economy with the hope of lifting Chinese citizens out of poverty in order to prevent a popular uprising against the communist party. In 1982, China announced a shift in its Africa policy from one focused on “war and revolution” to the need for “peace and development”.⁸ The shift set the stage for cooperative bilateral relations throughout the 1980s focused on peaceful and joint economic development. Although China continued to provide aid to Africa through the 1980s, their decisions on where to provide aid became more deliberate and economically motivated.⁹ Many of the Chinese principles like non-interference built solidarity between China and Africa and garnered African states access to Chinese investment despite their poor governance records and violation of human rights.¹⁰ Although engagement with Africa remained part of China’s strategy it did not start to assert itself as a priority until the 1990s.

China did not have the domestic energy resources to sustain the rapid economic growth that began in the 1990s. China became a net oil importer in 1993.¹¹ It quickly turned to Asia and Africa to fill the void. During the remainder of the decade, China focused significant diplomatic efforts toward Africa in order to secure access to resources and to win international support to counterbalance American pre-eminence in the post-Cold War world.¹²

Strategic Importance of Sub-Saharan Africa

During much of the latter half of the twentieth century, Sub-Saharan Africa struggled to overcome many of the issues associated with decolonization. The United States generally perceived Africa as a hopeless continent in need of endless humanitarian aid.¹³ The civil war in Rwanda, the lawlessness of Somalia, and the despotic regimes of Sudan and Zimbabwe only served to perpetuate these long held perceptions.

In the last decade, the confluence of a number of events, namely the United States “Global War on Terrorism” and China’s economic expansion, brought renewed attention to the continent. Africa remains a treasure trove of untapped natural resources, minerals, and arable land. A number of densely populated and rapidly developing countries, namely China and India, need these resources to fuel their growth. The most important of these resources remains oil. Many countries, to include the United States, look to Africa as a means of diversifying their energy reliance on the Middle East. Currently, the United States and China receive 20% and 30% respectively of their imported oil from Africa.¹⁴ A number of experts expect Africa to double its oil output over the next decade with the United States receiving as much as 25% of its oil imports from the region.¹⁵ China’s thirst for oil to support its exploding economy places it as the second largest importer of oil in the world behind only the United States. The International Energy Agency expects Chinese imports of oil to grow from 3.5 billion barrels per day (bpd) in 2006 to 13.1 bpd by the year 2030. Although Africa holds only nine percent of the world’s proven oil reserves many energy analysts believe it could hold significant undiscovered reserves.¹⁶ This growing interest in African oil between the two largest economies in the world will potentially drive up oil prices and result in increased instability in a region already struggling with poor governance.

In addition to oil, Sub-Saharan Africa holds vast reserves of commodities and minerals needed to support world markets and the growing technology industries. “The subcontinent contains the majority of known reserves of many key minerals, including 90% of the world's platinum-group metals; 90% of the world's chromium, two-thirds of the world's manganese, and 60% of its diamonds. It contains 60% of the world's phosphates, 50% of the world's vanadium, and 40-50% of the world's gold. Sub-Saharan Africa also boasts one-third of the planet's uranium

reserves, and one-third of its bauxite.”¹⁷ Already, China has invested billions of dollars in copper and cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia; in iron ore and platinum in South Africa; and in timber in Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo-Brazzaville.¹⁸

As China continues to develop and expand their manufacturing capabilities, they will continue to seek out export markets. Africa’s large and rapidly growing population provides China with a receptive market to unload cheap manufactured goods. The flood of cheap goods to Sub-Saharan Africa prevents the development of potential Chinese competitors. Additionally, China’s enormous untapped rural workforce of 750 million makes the establishment of Sub-Saharan Africa’s manufacturing industry less appealing or necessary.¹⁹

The terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 followed by the World Trade Center attacks brought significant attention to Sub-Saharan Africa. The incredible poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa makes it an ideal recruiting ground for Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist franchises. The brief takeover of Somalia’s capital Mogadishu by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Shabaab demonstrated the persistence and developing capability of terrorist groups if left unattended. Sub-Saharan Africa now serves as a battleground in the United States continuing fight against terrorism making the coordination and cooperation of African nations essential.

Finally, with the increased interaction of countries across the globe through trade and improved transportation systems, disease and the potential spread of epidemics poses a serious threat to both Africans and global health. Africa’s large population, unsanitary conditions due to tremendous poverty, and insufficient medical personnel and facilities make treatment and containment difficult.

As Sub-Saharan Africa's population continues to grow, the challenges facing the continent will only increase and intensify. Although, many potential benefits exist from the arrival of outside powers like China and India, poor management of this process could lead to detrimental consequences.

Chinese Goals and Influence in Africa

China's deliberate and pragmatic approach to the development of relationships within Africa finally came to fruition over the last decade. The carefully fostered ties with Africa provided the basis for Chinese economic expansion. At this point, China's goal in Africa clearly centers on securing resources to support the energy demands of its economy. China's swift expansion into Africa points to a long term strategy to ensure this lifeline remains open for years to come.

China's economy has grown at over nine percent per year for the last thirty years. Experts predict that their economy will continue to grow at similar rate over the next several years. This type of growth vaulted China past Japan as the second largest economy in the world with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about 5.1 trillion (U.S. Dollars) in 2010. Recently, a chief economist with Goldman Sachs predicted that China will overtake the United States economy by 2027. Currently China resides as the world's number one importer of iron ore and copper in addition to its previous mentioned attainment of the second largest consumer of crude oil.²⁰

Indicative of this significant growth in their economy is the increase in trade with Africa. In 2008, trade between Africa and China topped \$106 billion (USD).²¹ This capped astounding growth from the turn of the century when trade between China and Africa stood at \$10 billion

(USD).²² After briefly falling off in 2009 as a result of the global recession, China predicts that trade figures for 2010 will once again top \$100 billion (USD). As the number of Chinese companies operating in Africa, currently 1600, continues to grow, China will become more involved in protecting its interests throughout Africa.²³ In order to protect these interests China will continue to increase its military presence in the region and expedite the development of a blue water navy to protect the transportation of its trade with Africa.

Inside China, rapid industrialization and additional money in consumers' wallets led to a growing need to seek out large plots of arable land to support agricultural development and to ensure food security. The rapid growth of industry, with insufficient environmental laws in place, led to significant loss of arable land inside China from environmental damage. The demand for food soared as the tastes of consumers continue to expand and they demand more options.²⁴

In response to this new demand, China has begun to seek out land throughout Africa. As an example of the size of these initiatives, China pledged to invest \$800 million (USD) to revamp and update the Mozambique agricultural sector. China also invested millions to build dams and irrigation canals to support opening up large agricultural sectors.²⁵ These large corporate farming projects could impact subsistence farmers throughout the region in a negative manner.

Additionally, China continues to use Africa as a means to isolate Taiwan. All but four countries in Africa maintain diplomatic relations with China. China expects to continue to establish its presence in the region in the hope of converting these remaining four to their side.²⁶ China also sees Africa as a means to slow down many initiatives pushed by the United States

within the United Nations. As the only “developing nation” serving as a member of the UN Security Council, China plays to the sympathies and concerns of many African nations.

Finally, with increased cooperation in the region between Chinese and African militaries, China looks to Africa as a military arms export market. The Chinese have a long history of supporting Africa with military training and weapons. In recent years, the increased presence of the Chinese military in UN missions, anti-piracy operations, and a large number of military exchange programs raised eyebrows within the United States. The low cost of Chinese arms makes it a popular alternative to the expensive military arms of the West.²⁷ Africa made up 11% of Chinese arms sales worldwide from 2005-2009. China also made a significant contribution to the 2010 Africa Aerospace and Defense exhibition held in South Africa with a number of defense contractors in attendance.²⁸

China’s Africa Policy

While the United States became bogged down in the Middle East through its use of hard power in Iraq and Afghanistan, China prudently crafted a strategy based on soft power to increase its influence in Africa and support the expansion of its rapidly growing economy. China applied soft power by promoting China’s shared historical ties with Africa, the democratization of international relations through its status and influence in the UN, and the use of the “China Model” as an economic alternative to the “Washington Consensus” for African nations.

The framework of China’s Africa Policy rested on a carefully constructed relationship between China and Africa spanning fifty years of friendship and dialogue. China stressed its own history of overcoming colonial subjugation and years of internal turmoil, before rising as an economic power, as a parallel and achievable paradigm for African nations to follow. It

emphasized the importance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to continued joint development and progress. In 2006, China laid out its long term strategy for African engagement and development through the announcement of China's "Africa Policy". The underlining theme of the strategy centered on the pursuit of an independent foreign policy of peace to achieve solidarity and cooperation with African countries. The Chinese viewed the implementation of this policy as a way to elevate their strategic partnership with Africa. The key principles of this strategy focused on "sincerity, friendship, and equality", "mutual benefit, reciprocity, and common prosperity", "mutual support and close coordination", "learning from each other and seeking common development", with the overarching political principle of One China. As J. Peter Pham points out, "more concretely those objectives can be translated as quests for resources, business opportunities, diplomatic initiatives, and building strategic partnerships."²⁹

In addition to the key principles underlying the policy, China also specified four key lines of operation it would emphasize to implement this policy. The first line of operation, political cooperation, focused on high level visits between leaders and political party exchanges, the establishment of bilateral committees to ensure coordination of growth, and cooperation at the international level through the use of the UN to build a new international political and economic order that safeguards the rights and interests of developing nations. The second line of operation, economic cooperation, concentrated on bilateral trade agreements, Chinese investment in Africa, infrastructure development, formulation of a China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation Program, and debt reduction and relief. The third line of operation, cooperation in cultural exchange, focused on the expansion of programs for human resource development, education, science and technology, medicine and health, and the environment. The final line of operation,

security cooperation, emphasized military training exercises and technology exchanges to improve the capabilities of African militaries to conduct security operations. It also concentrated on improving intelligence sharing to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling.³⁰

Over the last several years, the “democratization of international relations” gained support within China as a means of stifling the pursuits of the United States in order to protect Chinese interests.³¹ China views Africa, with its numerous nations, as a key component to this strategy. Through the promotion of democratization, equality, and justice at the international level China attempts to support many of the disadvantaged Third World countries, particularly those in Africa, who feel they must deal with the United States on an unequal playing field. China uses the UN as a tool to promote the democratization of international affairs. As a member of the UN Security Council, China emphasizes its empathy with the developing Third World countries within the UN General Assembly. This position provides China with significant influence in the decision making process at the UN and helps block unilateral actions by the United States.³²

In the eyes of African nations, China made significant strides within their region through its substantial support on UN peacekeeping operations. Currently, China deploys over 2,100 military personnel in support of missions worldwide, with the majority of those missions in Sub-Saharan Africa. This constitutes the largest contribution of peacekeepers among the five members of the UN Security Council. It also allows China to promote its image as a rising Great Power committed to the responsible and peaceful resolution of conflicts.³³

Not surprisingly, China refuses to provide support to the UN supported mission in Afghanistan. Their refusal primarily stems from the fact that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leads the effort in Afghanistan. Much of China’s distrust for NATO

derives from the bombing of the Chinese Embassy by NATO led forces during the Kosovo War in 1999.³⁴ China's refusal to support the mission also highlights Chinese concerns of damaging its reputation of non-interference and peaceful coexistence, making itself a target of Islamic terrorism, and promoting the rise of China as a military power. China's absence from the war in Afghanistan allows it to use soft power tools elsewhere, like Sub-Saharan Africa, to promote Chinese interests.

Finally, the last major soft power tool implemented by China in Sub-Saharan Africa is the use of the "China Model". Over the last thirty years, China lifted over 600 million citizens out of poverty according to World Bank estimates. This dramatic progress makes the Chinese system attractive to many leaders of authoritarian governments in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its true beauty lies in its ability to raise the economic well-being of the people while enabling dictators to remain in power.³⁵ Rowan Callick describes the "China Model" as the following:

It has two components. The first is to copy successful elements of liberal economic policy by opening up much of the economy to foreign and domestic investment, allowing labor flexibility, keeping the tax and regulatory burden low, and creating a first-class infrastructure through a combination of private sector and state spending. The second part is to permit the ruling party to retain a firm grip on government, the courts, the army, the internal security apparatus, and the free flow of information. A shorthand way to describe the model is: economic freedom plus political repression.³⁶

The success of the "China Model" lends itself as a prospective goal for replication by many Sub-Saharan autocratic governments. Many of these governments see interaction and the adoption of Chinese policies as a way to work towards the economic success of China for their own countries.

China's Negative Influence on Sub-Saharan Africa

Due to the significant need for infrastructure and capital investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, China's arrival with its large pocketbook and numerous construction firms brought tremendous gains and improvements over the last decade. Unfortunately, many of China's policies clash directly with United States goals to develop free markets and lift Sub-Saharan Africa out of poverty. In particular, China's willingness to invest and provide aid to autocratic countries with no preconditions placed on the demonstration of good governance and transparency conflicts directly with U.S. policy to combat corruption while promoting good governance. The result of China's non-interference policy is the development of exceedingly corrupt countries like Sudan, Angola, and Zimbabwe which promote poor governance and lead to instability in the region. A closer look at Angola and Zimbabwe will exhibit and highlight some of the problems with Chinese methods and involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Angola

Currently Angola tops the chart as the largest producer of oil in Africa and the largest exporter of oil to China in the world. Despite this distinction, Angola ranks 146 out of 169 countries on the UN Human Development Indicators Index with the majority of the population (54%) living below the poverty line.³⁷ Angola also ranks near the top in corruption according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index for 2010 in which Angola ranked 168 out of 178 countries.³⁸ China's decision to provide Angola with package deals in which China secures access to oil markets in exchange for infrastructure development projects with no strings attached enables this culture of corruption and poverty to persist.

In 2002, Angola emerged from a devastating civil war that resulted from Portugal's hasty departure from the colony in 1975. The civil war left over a million dead, millions more displaced, a crumbling and useless infrastructure, and a nation dependent on foreign aid for survival. Shortly after the conclusion of the civil war, Angola tried to solicit donors in order to initiate reconstruction efforts. At first, Angola turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. However, when the IMF arrived and conducted a study of Angola's finances over the last five years, they discovered over \$4 billion USD in unaccounted government funds. After attempting to work with the Angolan government on reforms and transparency to little avail, the IMF released a report specifying Angola's unwillingness to correct the problems. The report caused western banks and loan agencies to bail on a donor's conference scheduled for July of 2002. The collapse of the donor's conference forced Angola to seek out other sources of investment.³⁹ In 2004, Angola found a willing donor in China. According to the Angolan government, they signed an agreement with China for three separate loans, \$2 billion USD, \$500 million USD, and \$2 billion USD, respectively and backed by Angolan oil.⁴⁰ The signing of this deal crowned later as the "Angola mode", would initiate a model for access to natural resource used by China throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The "Angola mode" works along the following guidelines:

The process includes the signature of an intergovernmental framework agreement establishing the purpose, amount, maturity and interest rate of the loan, followed by a loan agreement (concessional most of the times, with interest subsidized by the Chinese government) between Exim Bank and the borrower. Interest varies from 1.25% to 3% and the grace period from five to eight years, with repayment over 10–20 years. The capital is disbursed in successive tranches, released against project completion and directly paid to Chinese companies in China through Exim Bank.⁴¹

A significant aspect of these loans ensured 70% of the contracts from the deal to rebuild Angolan infrastructure went to Chinese firms.⁴² The Chinese government financed this deal through its

state owned bank, China Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank). The Exim Bank focuses on providing loans in exchange for natural resources and oil. The Angolan government uses the credit line provided by Exim bank to prioritize infrastructure projects and works in conjunction with the Chinese Ministry of Commercial and Foreign Affairs (MOFCOM). Once they agree on the projects, China assigns a company to work on the project and Exim Bank disburses the necessary funds to the contractor. The Angolan Ministry of Finance repays the debt upon completion of the project with revenues from an escrow account based on the sale of oil. The government of Angola is left to use additional revenue from the sale of oil as it sees fit.⁴³ The additional revenue receives no oversight and often finds its way into the pockets of the political elite.

An undisclosed portion of these loans fell to the Office of National Reconstruction (GRN) under the control of the Angolan President's office. As the office overseeing most of the reconstruction projects, many believe that they controlled a significant portion of these loans. Due to the lack of transparency, the Angolan government refuses to discuss the amount of money controlled by the president's office despite repeated inquiries. Additionally, China benefits twofold based on the terms of the loans as Angola pays with oil and Chinese firms receive most of the contracts.⁴⁴ Since this first loan agreement in Angola, China has gone on to lend over \$14.5 billion USD to Angola since the end of their civil war.⁴⁵

Although Chinese investments led to significant improvements in infrastructure, most of the country remains wallowing in poverty while the political elite continue to benefit almost exclusively from the deals with China. The already poor governance combined with a lack of transparency in the transactions with China leave Angola dependent on continued Chinese investment. China's insistence on a policy of non-interference inhibits any change in the

governance or transparency status. The Angolan government lacks the ability to maintain the completed projects or occupy the infrastructure with an adequate work force for its intended use. The Angolan government's decision to rely explicitly on oil trade with China inhibits its ability to diversify the economy into other sectors.⁴⁶ The extractive industries support an extremely small segment of the workforce. The lack of a diversified economy results in widespread poverty throughout the country. More importantly, as the dependency on China grows, the ability of the United States to influence political and economic change within Angola continues to weaken.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe serves as another example of the negative impact of Chinese influence and support for authoritarian regimes within the region. China's policy of non-interference in African domestic issues in exchange for access to natural resources enables authoritarian regimes to remain in power. The establishment of Sino-African relationships with authoritarian governments also stifles United States efforts to promote good governance, human rights and economic transparency in the region. Once one of the most successful countries in Africa, Zimbabwe now lies at the bottom of most indices for development. According to the 2010 UN Human Development Index, Zimbabwe ranks dead last out of 169 countries reviewed.⁴⁷ China's continued support, particularly with respect to arms sales, makes Zimbabwe a ticking time bomb that could spread instability across the region in the event of its collapse.

China's relationship with Zimbabwe dates back to the 1960s when Zimbabwe began its liberation movement against a white minority government. Upon gaining its independence in

1980, Zimbabwe quickly established diplomatic ties with China to demonstrate appreciation for Chinese support during its independence movement.⁴⁸

Many of Zimbabwe's current problems started with the collapse of their stock market in 1997 after a decision to reimburse war veterans which led to a fiscal deficit. During the remaining years of the decade, opposition to Robert Mugabe's government continued to mount as economic and civil rights continued to deteriorate. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), formed in 1999, began to assert its rising influence in the 2000 parliamentary elections in which they defeated a government backed referendum for a new constitution. Marred by violence, the 2002 presidential elections resulted in another victory for Robert Mugabe. However, international observers' claims of fraud and corruption in the election process coupled with his brutal land redistribution efforts led to economic and military sanctions against Mugabe's government by the United States and the European Union.⁴⁹

These actions by the West prompted Robert Mugabe to formulate his "Look East" policy in 2003. Mugabe hoped to use the rising Asian economies to compensate for lost aid and investment from the West. China's need for new markets made them a key player in the policy. China's interest in Zimbabwe concentrated on agricultural products like tobacco to support a large smoking population and industrial minerals like platinum to sustain the rapidly expanding Chinese auto industry.⁵⁰ The Chinese, in exchange for access to these markets, supported Mugabe's regime with sales of military equipment. Mugabe used the military equipment to prop up the security establishment in order to maintain control and suppress political upheaval.⁵¹ In addition to arms sales, China used its influential position on the UN Security Council to block sanctions against Zimbabwe.⁵²

After Mugabe's political party won a two-thirds majority in the 2005 parliamentary elections, his brutal regime attempted to punish opposition supporters with the execution of Operation Restore Order. The operation attempted to rid the urban areas of "illegal housing and businesses". It resulted in the displacement of 700,000 people, mostly MDC supporters, into the rural areas of Zimbabwe.⁵³ Many observers familiar with the dynamics of the situation feel the operation also supported the removal of competition to new Chinese business as a part of the "Look East" policy.⁵⁴

The presidential elections in 2008 once again brought Chinese support of Robert Mugabe's authoritarian regime into question. Zimbabwe law required a runoff election after no candidate won an absolute majority in the initial election in March. Violence characterized the campaign environment leading up to the runoff election in June.⁵⁵ During this period, the detention of a Chinese ship containing 80 tons of arms and weapons, at a South African port, destined for Zimbabwe brought international condemnation.⁵⁶ The MDC candidate's withdrawal from the race due to violence led to another Robert Mugabe victory. The shipment of arms and weapons reaffirmed Chinese support for Mugabe and their concerns of a pro-Western leader taking control of Zimbabwe. Once more, the international community declared the election unjust and sought UN sanctions, but China blocked any attempts at sanctions and pushed for negotiations between Robert Mugabe and the opposition party.⁵⁷

The negotiations after the 2008 elections led to a coalition government with Robert Mugabe as the president and the MDC opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, as the prime minister of Zimbabwe. Despite the coalition government, Mugabe's control of the military and intelligence service made him the true power broker in Zimbabwe.⁵⁸ China's continued resistance to become involved in the situation does not bode well for improvements in

governance or transparency. The political elite continue to benefit from Chinese investment while the average citizenry suffers from poverty. China's persistent involvement in Zimbabwe remains the extraction of resources. In early 2011, China offered a \$10 billion USD loan for access to platinum reserves. This loan would greatly exceed the \$6 billion USD GDP for Zimbabwe.⁵⁹

U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa

Over the last fifty years, U.S. strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa underwent significant shifts. During much of the Cold War, the United States found itself supporting an entangled web of liberation movements as it tried to halt the advancement of the Soviet Union in the region. The end of the Cold War forced the United States to reevaluate its policy in the region. Initially, the United States initiated a policy of engagement to support humanitarian efforts and democratization in support of a "New World Order". This policy quickly shifted after the failed United States mission to Somalia from 1992-1994. The United States retreated from the region and avoided any direct involvement with the Rwandan genocide. The United States policy focused on aid, less emphasis on democratization, and a push for "Africans solutions to African problems".⁶⁰

The impact of Islamic radical terrorism resulting in attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 refocused the United States attention on Sub-Saharan Africa over the last decade. In addition to terrorism, the instability of the Middle East region forced the United States to seriously consider energy security by looking for other sources of oil in order to diversify its dependency on any one region.

Going forward, the Obama Administration laid out five pillars to guide United States policy in Africa: democracy, economic growth, health care, resolving conflict, and transnational challenges. In order to make these pillars viable, the United States must first make a concerted effort to recognize the significance of the Sub-Saharan region to national security. The danger in our current policy lies in the potential to treat Sub-Saharan Africa as a welfare state void of any real national interest. The “War on Terrorism” and energy security currently drives United States policy and involvement in Africa. The establishment of AFRICOM highlights the United States’ concerns with transnational terrorism in the Sahel region of Sub-Saharan Africa and the need for security cooperation with African states to counter this threat. In addition to terrorism and energy security, the United States must make some significant enhancements to its policies in order to counter the threat posed by China in the region.

Within the realm of diplomacy, the United States must emphasize an increased level of diplomatic engagement with African countries by high ranking civilian and military personnel. Over the last decade, China placed significant focus on this area. China created the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, which meets every three years, to promote dialogue in order to ensure coordinated efforts and goals toward mutual improvement. The Chinese premier also made it a point to make Africa his first official trip each year. This in conjunction with numerous high level visits from other Chinese leaders and politicians improved relations and trust between China and Africa. Recently, in the confirmation hearing for the new AFRICOM commander, General Ham, a United States Senator indicated a lack of engagement by political leaders at the African Union Headquarters in Ethiopia.

The United States needs to make significant improvements within the Bureau of African Affairs. According to a recent internal investigation, current understaffing inhibits long term

policy formulation and causes the bureau to remain in a reactionary state to events in the region. The lack of funding within the bureau often forces them to play a secondary role to AFRICOM. The emergence of China, terrorism, and energy security in the region requires a new emphasis on Africa not previously adopted in U.S. history. This emphasis must start in the State Department with the Bureau of African Affairs.⁶¹

Economically, the United States must make dramatic improvements within its trade policy initiatives. Many hailed the establishment of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2000 as a new paradigm in United States-Sub-Saharan Africa relations. The AGOA looked to change the relations paradigm from aid to trade. However, ten years since its adoption, the minimal impact of AGOA on the region should cause policymakers to question its utility. According to the United States International Trade Commission, energy related products make up over 91% of the exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to the United States in 2010.⁶² Three countries, Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa, account for over 85% of the exports to the United States under the AGOA out of 41 eligible countries.⁶³ Africa's poor infrastructure, weak merchandising, and inability to comply with phytosanitary regulations make the opening up of trade difficult.⁶⁴

A significant factor in the failure of the AGOA remains policymaker's inability to reduce or eliminate United States farming subsidies. The agriculture industry in Africa accounts for over a quarter of GDP and employs 70% of Africa's population.⁶⁵ If the United State hopes to make any progress with trade within Sub-Saharan Africa it must reevaluate the AGOA. AGOA lifted a significant number of tariffs in an effort to open up United States markets to Sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, many of the non-tariff barriers, like farming subsidies, remain making it

difficult for African countries lacking in energy resources to enter United States markets. Ryan McCormick sums it up best:

For several decades, the United States has driven the global economy with its large consumer market and liberal trade policy. Strategic U.S. trade policy has relied on targeted measures and financial investments to promote key industries in the face of mounting competition from Japan and the Asian tigers. But in an open economy based on free markets and limited government regulation, there is little justification for imposing high barriers to entry for agricultural goods, textiles, and apparel—particularly when the United States' ability to remain competitive in the global economy will likely depend on its ability to maintain a comparative advantage in capital intensive industries employing a highly skilled labor force. Lingering U.S. protectionism in agriculture and apparel markets represents the remnants of an antiquated trade policy dominated by parochial interests and regional concerns.⁶⁶

The United States trade policy must complement adjustments in AGOA with increased funding for economic developmental projects, like the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), in order to enable access to United States markets. "Currently in Sub Saharan Africa, the most pressing problem to economic development rests with an insufficient and crumbling infrastructure. In recent years, investments in infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa have averaged about \$10 billion per year, equivalent to just three percent of the region's gross domestic product and only approximately half of what is needed to support sustained economic growth."⁶⁷ The MCC attempts to provide grants to countries who demonstrate democratic governance and a focus on economic growth.⁶⁸ Since its inception, the MCC signed deals with eleven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa worth over \$4.5 billion USD.⁶⁹ Each of these deals allocates funds for projects over a five year period. Based on the significant infrastructure improvements required in Sub Saharan Africa this level of development aid will not make a substantial impact on the economy. The United States must allocate more personnel toward MCC and increase its funding. It must also consider slight adjustments to its eligibility criteria.

Many Sub-Saharan Africa countries do not qualify due to their inability to meet difficult eligibility criteria.

In 2008, the United States established AFRICOM, a new combatant command for Africa, to focus and coordinate foreign policy and security cooperation on the continent. At the time of its creation, three separate military commands shared responsibility for the African continent. Initially, AFRICOM did not receive a warm reception on the African continent. Many African countries viewed the establishment of AFRICOM as a means for the United States to militarize its foreign policy within the region. This perception placed AFRICOM on its heels from the start. It spent the last three years trying to build relationships and explain its new role.

According to General Ward, the commander of AFRICOM, the top priority on the continent is stability. He plans to support this by conducting combined exercises, building an effective non-commissioned officer corps, developing support and special staff capabilities, and the construction of military infrastructure in individual African militaries and countries.⁷⁰ The African Union's authority to intervene within the internal politics of member states makes the African Standby Force (ASF) an essential instrument of stability management on the continent.⁷¹ Eventually, the AU hopes to create an ASF with five regional brigades composed of 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers each and a headquarters brigade collocated with the AU.⁷² The United States must make the ASF their top priority to ensure regional stability. The development and use of this collective security body will not only assist in maintaining stability and security, but also reduce the need for unilateral U.S. action in the region. The development of a capable collective security force, tied to U.S. doctrine and partnerships, will also make Chinese military intervention more difficult.

Conclusion

To this point China's policies resulted in significant economic reward with increased access to oil and natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa. The diplomatic focus and the Chinese model of advancement received a welcome reception from many autocratic rulers in the region looking for capital infusion and infrastructure development. The political elite in Africa garnered most of the economic return while the remainder of their populations continued to struggle. The Chinese benefited greatly during the last decade from a lack of United States emphasis on the area due to conflicts within the Middle East. As China's influence and strategic reliance on the region continues to grow, China will face some potential negative aspects of their Africa Policy. Some of the potential issues they will face consist of popular backlash against their economic policies, instability, and terrorism. This should open up opportunities for the U.S. to interact with China to solve some of the underlying issues within the region.

The U.S. must act quickly to adjust its policies to ensure its future role as the leader in Sub-Saharan Africa. If the United States continues to turn a blind eye to the region and treat it as a welfare state, China will continue to close the gap, despite some of the problems they face. Although the United States possesses significant advantages with respect to language and culture it must redefine its diplomatic and economic policies to capitalize on these advantages. The continued development of AFRICOM will serve as symbol of U.S. commitment and an apparatus for stability creation and enforcement. However, the U.S. must continue to take steps to ensure AFRICOM does not overwhelm foreign policy efforts in the region.

Other than economic sustainment, China's long term intentions in the Sub-Saharan Africa remain unknown. One thing is for sure, Chinese involvement in the region is not temporary. Their Africa Policy implies long term commitment in the region for years to come. Therefore,

the U.S. must find common ground to engage China as a means to better understand Chinese intentions, improve the plight of the Sub-Saharan African people, and secure vital interests. The wide scope of U.S. and Chinese interests in the region bring a number of issues important to both countries to the forefront. Both countries possess interest in the improvement of infrastructure development to increase access to markets, medical assistance to prevent global outbreaks of diseases like malaria and AIDS, transnational terrorism, piracy, the environment, and the improvement of the agricultural sector.

While the United States remains engaged in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa is quickly approaching a crossroads in its future growth and development. The tenuous hold of democracy in the region, along with a rash of upcoming elections, requires the United States to reengage. The failure to reenergize U.S. involvement in the region will have long term consequences. In addition to reduced access to energy deposits vital to energy security, the U.S. will lose influence in the region. The U.S. must act now to prevent Sub-Saharan Africa from making a slow, but gradual turn to the east.

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